

# West Texas Regional Roundtable



## Stakeholder Feedback

*On Wednesday, June 16th the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board hosted a roundtable discussion in Lubbock, Texas to update the West Texas Region on gains made towards **Closing the Gaps by 2015** and outline specific strategies designed to accelerate progress. The Coordinating Board also outlined new models for funding universities and community colleges designed to fundamentally shift focus toward student success. During the breakout sessions, local leaders were asked to share their input and ideas on student success generally, and the Coordinating Board's initiatives specifically. Below is a short summary of the major themes that emerged from the stakeholders present.*

### Fixing the West Texas P-16 Education Pipeline

- ❖ Better connect public education students to higher education.
- ❖ Promote and expand dual credit offerings to public education students.
- ❖ Implement better long-range planning at state level across both public education and higher education sectors.
- ❖ Recognize role of tuition as possible barrier to higher education—too high for most families.
- ❖ Provide more financial aid to middle-income families.
- ❖ Provide access to vocational and technical education opportunities.
- ❖ Standardize GPA across the state.
- ❖ Need better social/educational infrastructure for 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students.
- ❖ Require students to complete FAFSA and common application in high school.
- ❖ Increase incentives for high achieving students to enter teaching.
- ❖ Provide more flexibility and local control so school districts can address unique educational barriers.

### Recommendations for Improving Proposed Funding Models

- ❖ The new model for universities should include a higher premium for at-risk students.
- ❖ The new models should have a safety net provision in the event institutions experience unexpected and dramatic reductions in funding allocations.
- ❖ The current fiscal environment creates challenges that make the timing of the new proposal not ideal.
- ❖ The new model for universities should differentiate completion rates between Freshman/Sophomore and Junior/Senior classes—upper division class completion should be funded at higher rates.
- ❖ Expand phase-in over a longer period of time.
- ❖ Pilot the changes to review and assess impacts.

### Other Strategies for Student Success

- ❖ Provide financial incentive for faculty to engage in and develop better support services.
- ❖ Promote the P-16 connections more aggressively, and expose K-12 students to college experience earlier in education.

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### Other Strategies for Student Success (con't)

- ❖ Incent student success—identify and implement novel ways to recognize students for their achievement and academic progress other than simply a degree ceremony at end of educational process.
- ❖ Focus on and encourage more faculty/student interaction.
- ❖ Reward faculty for better teaching—place teaching on equal footing with research.
- ❖ Mandate academic advising for students.
- ❖ Develop re-entry programs for returning students that help address some of challenges associated with this population.
- ❖ Increase and promote counseling for retention of students.